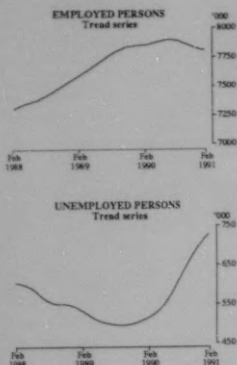


# Statistics Weekly

Thursday, 21 March 1991

## *The week in statistics ...*

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## Sharp fall in full-time employment

The February 1991 survey of the labour force recorded the largest decline in full-time employment since the monthly survey commenced in February 1978. The estimate of unemployed persons also reached the highest absolute level recorded by the survey, but at 8.7 per cent was still short of the record 10.3 per cent set in 1983.

The seasonally adjusted estimate of employed persons fell by 30,700 to 7,792,500. This decrease was the net result of a fall of 92,200 in full-time employment offset by a rise of 61,600 in part-time employment. Male full-time employment fell by 48,100, while part-time employment increased by 26,900. For females, full-time employment fell by 44,200 with part-time employment increasing by 34,700.

The February 1991 seasonally adjusted estimate of unemployed persons rose by 26,100 to 738,300. Male unemployment rose by 17,800 to 434,200 and female unemployment increased by 8,300 to 304,100. The main components were a rise of 11,300 in the number of males seeking full-time work and a rise of 11,900 in the number of females seeking full-time work.

The seasonally adjusted estimate of the unemployment rate for January 1991 rose to 8.7 per cent. The male unemployment rate increased by 0.4 percentage points to 8.7 per cent and for females the rate rose by 0.2 percentage points to 8.6 per cent.

Seasonally adjusted, the labour force participation rate was little changed at 63.6 per cent.

LABOUR FORCE ESTIMATES  
Seasonally adjusted

	Employed			Unemployment rate — Per cent —	Participation rate
	Full-time workers	Part-time workers	Total employed		
	— '000 —				
1990 —					
November	6,160.0	1,672.1	7,832.0	8.2	63.9
December	6,169.2	1,676.8	7,846.0	8.1	63.8
1991 —					
January	6,157.4	1,665.8	7,823.2	8.3	63.7
February	6,065.2	1,727.4	7,792.5	8.7	63.6

For further information, order the publication *The Labour Force, Australia*, Preliminary (6202.0), or contact Don Clark on (06) 252 6525.

## Retail trade improves slightly

Seasonally adjusted retail turnover increased by 2.5 per cent in January 1991 over the relatively low December 1990 figure.

The trend estimates of turnover (at current prices) now show an average monthly increase of 0.1 per cent for the three months ended January 1991. The annual increase (January 1991 over January 1990) is now 2.6 per cent which is an average monthly increase of 0.2 per cent.

*Continued ...*



Grocers, confectioners and tobacconists have maintained a strong growth rate over the past three months. Clothing and fabric stores, have improved considerably over the last three months following a period of little or no growth. Hotels, liquor stores and licensed clubs and department stores are still in decline. Of the smaller industries covered by the survey, footwear stores and electrical goods stores are showing strong growth. The remaining industries are showing weak growth or are in decline.

#### RETAIL TURNOVER

	Original value in January 1991 \$ million	Percentage change in trend estimates	
		Average monthly increase for 3 months to January 1991	January 1991 over January 1990
Grocers, confectioners, tobacconists	2,162	1.0	10.2
Clothing and fabrics stores	482	1.0	4.0
Department and general stores	697	-0.3	1.9
Hotels, liquor stores, licensed clubs	952	-1.0	1.0
Other industries	2,687	n.a.	n.a.
<i>All industries</i>	<i>6,980</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>2.6</i>

Trend estimates for South Australia show an average growth of 0.9 per cent over the last three months. After almost a year of decline, retail turnover in Victoria showed an average increase of 0.2 per cent for the three months ended January. New South Wales has declined slightly over the last three months while the remaining States are showing weak or no growth.

For further information, order the publication *Retail Trade, Australia (8501.0)*, or contact Bill Powell on (06) 252 6132.

## Sheep slaughterings, mutton production at 18-year high

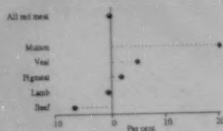
In January 1991, sheep slaughterings for human consumption were the highest since March 1973 and rose by 14.3 per cent for the month.

The January figure of 1,809,000 was a 17.3 per cent annual increase. In the seven months to January 1991 there were also 17.3 per cent more sheep slaughtered than in the same period a year earlier.

#### LIVESTOCK SLAUGHTERED, JANUARY 1991 Percentage change

	From December 1990	From January 1990
Sheep	14.3	17.3
Pigs	-11.5	-0.7
Lambs	7.1	-3.2
Calves	6.4	-3.4
Cattle	-6.6	-3.5
Chickens	-3.9	-9.7

RED MEAT PRODUCTION  
Change January 1990 to January 1991



As a consequence over 39,000 tonnes of mutton was produced in January 1991, the largest monthly production since March 1973. The January figure was 14.6 per cent higher than the December 1990 total and 20.4 per cent higher than January 1990.

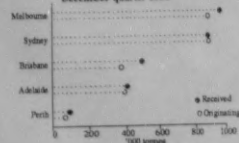
Despite the big rise for mutton, production of all red meat in January 1991 (202,418 tonnes) decreased by 3.5 per cent in original terms against December 1990 and 0.4 per cent annually. In seasonally adjusted terms the decrease in January 1991 was 10.1 per cent.

Receipts of taxable wool in January 1991 fell by 7.3 per cent in original terms over December 1990, but increased by 19.3 per cent seasonally adjusted. When compared with January 1990 there was a decrease of 2.2 per cent in original terms and 0.8 per cent seasonally adjusted.

For further information, order the publication *Livestock Products, Australia* (7215.0), or contact Cheryl Warry on (06) 252 5337.

## Road freight movement down against trend

INTERSTATE ROAD FREIGHT MOVEMENT  
December quarter 1990



Total interstate road freight moved by major operators during the December quarter 1990 was 2.5 per cent lower than the September quarter 1990. This drop went against the trend in recent years, where December quarter figures typically were higher than those in the September quarters.

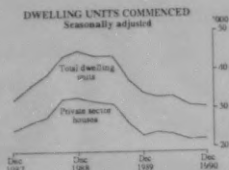
Decreases in freight originating were recorded in most major centres, while increases in freight received were recorded in all major centres except Sydney.

A significant number of enterprises indicated that the economic downturn resulted in lower tonnage moved this quarter. In addition, a smaller number of enterprises noted that rising fuel costs or industrial problems affected their volume of freight moved.

INTERSTATE ROAD FREIGHT MOVEMENT, DECEMBER QUARTER 1990

	Road freight originating		Road freight received	
	'000 tonnes	Percentage change on previous quarter	'000 tonnes	Percentage change on previous quarter
Sydney	889	4.6	885	-1.5
Melbourne	884	-5.2	965	1.0
Brisbane	373	-2.8	498	7.9
Adelaide	390	-5.6	407	1.1
Perth	77	6.6	101	0.6
Canberra	35	-22.9	149	18.0
Other	1,019	-4.4	664	-19.1
Total	3,668	-2.5	3,668	-2.5

For further information, order the publication *Interstate Road Freight Movement, Australia* (9214.0), or contact Choon Looi on (06) 252 5458.



## Decline in housing starts eases

Total dwelling units commenced fell slightly in the December quarter 1990 on a seasonally adjusted basis. The latest data confirm the easing of the rate of decline in dwelling commencements since the June quarter 1989 and follow dwelling approvals data showing similar trends. A small increase in private sector commencements in December quarter was more than offset by a decrease in public sector dwelling commencements.

In seasonally adjusted terms, the number of dwelling units commenced in the December quarter 1990 (30,480), declined by 1.2 per cent from the September quarter 1990 figure of 30,850, and was 10.4 per cent lower than the December quarter 1989 estimate of 34,030.

DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS  
December Quarter 1990

	Private sector houses		Total dwelling units	
	Number	Percentage change on previous quarter	Number	Percentage change on previous quarter
Original	22,870	2.1	31,770	-0.1
Seasonally adjusted	22,120	0.5	30,480	-1.2

In original terms, the total number of dwelling units commenced in the December quarter 1990 was 31,770, comparable with the September quarter figure of 31,810. Increases in commencements in New South Wales, South Australia, and the Northern Territory were offset by decreases in the other states and the Australian Capital Territory. Comparing December quarter 1990 with December quarter 1989, only South Australia and the Northern Territory recorded increased dwelling commencements.

For further information, order the publication *Building Activity, Australia: Dwelling Unit Commencements, Preliminary (8750.0)*, or contact Janet Flynn on (06) 252 6067.

## This week in brief ...

### □ Award rates of pay

Over the twelve months to January 1991, the weekly award rates of pay index for full-time adult employees rose by 4.2 per cent. For full-time adult males and full-time adult females the indexes rose by 4.0 per cent and 4.6 per cent respectively.

Source: *Award Rates of Pay Indexes, Australia, January 1991 (6312.0)*.

### □ Tourist accommodation

Rooms available in Australian hotels and motels with facilities increased by 7.2 per cent to 153,113 in September quarter 1990 compared with 142,811 in September quarter 1989. Room nights sold, however, increased by only 4.2 per cent from 7.09 million to 7.39 million over the same period.

Source: *Tourist Accommodation, Australia, September Quarter 1990 (8635.0)*.

## Inquiries

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- ☐ by mail order (including subscription)
- ☐ by facsimile
- ☐ electronically.

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### ABS State Offices

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Qld (07) 222 6351  
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### Suggestions

Any suggestions for improvement to this publication should be addressed to:

Robert Nixon  
Editor  
*Statistics Weekly*  
(06) 252 6104

## All the week's releases: 13 to 19 March

### General

Statistics Weekly, 14 March 1991 (1318.0; \$4.00)  
Economic Indicators, Qld, March 1991 (1307.3; \$6.00)  
Summary of Statistics, NT, December Qtr 1990 (1305.7; \$8.50)  
Territory Business Indicators, March 1991 (1307.7; \$4.00)

### Demography

Causes of Death, NSW, 1989 (3302.1; \$7.60) — *final issue*  
Births, Vic., 1989 (3305.2; \$7.50) — *final issue*

### National accounts, finance and foreign trade

Government Finance Statistics, Tas., 1988-89 (5501.6; \$11.50)

### Labour statistics and prices

The Labour Force, Aust., February 1991, Preliminary (6202.0; \$10.00)  
Persons Not in the Labour Force, Aust., September 1990 (6220.0; \$11.50)  
Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Migrants, Aust., September 1990 (6250.0; \$11.50)  
The Labour Force, Aust. — Preliminary Data on Floppy Disk, February 1991 (6271.0; \$65.00)  
Award Rates of Pay Indexes, Aust., January 1991 (6312.0; \$10.00)

### Agriculture

Crops and Pastures, SA, 1989-90 (7321.4; \$15.00)

### Secondary industry and distribution

Enterprise Statistics, Aust., 1986-87 (8103.0; \$25.00)  
Manufacturing Production, Aust., Fibres, Yarns, Fabrics, Bedding and Floor Coverings, December 1990 (8360.0; \$10.00)  
Retail Trade, Aust., January 1991 (8501.0; \$10.00)  
Tourist Accommodation, Aust., September Qtr 1990 (8635.0; \$10.00)  
Building Activity, Aust.: Dwelling Unit Commencements, December Qtr 1990, Preliminary (8750.0; \$10.00)  
Dwelling Unit Commencements Reported by Approving Authorities, NSW, December 1990 (8741.1; \$10.00)  
Manufacturing Establishments: Details of Operations, Qld, 1988-89 (8203.3; \$12.50) — *final issue*  
Building Approvals — Private Sector, Perth Statistical Division, February 1991 (8732.5; \$3.50)  
Building Approvals, Tas., January 1991 (8731.6; \$8.50)  
Tourist Accommodation, ACT, December Qtr 1990 (8635.8; \$4.50)

### Transport

Interstate Road Freight Movement, Aust., December Qtr 1990 (9214.0; \$5.50)  
Motor Vehicle Registrations, Tas., January 1991 (9303.6; \$5.00)  
Road Traffic Accidents Involving Casualties, Tas., December Qtr 1990 (9405.6; \$5.00)  
Road Traffic Accidents Involving Casualties, Tas., December 1990 (9406.6; \$10.00)

## Calendar of key releases

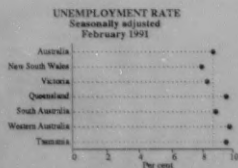
Expected releases over the fortnight to 2 April 1991

### March

- 21** Australian National Accounts: National Income and Expenditure, December Quarter 1990 (\$206.0; \$20.00)  
 Australian National Accounts: Gross Product, Employment and Hours Worked, December Quarter 1990 (\$222.0; \$9.00)  
 Housing Finance For Owner Occupation, Australia, January 1991 (\$609.0; \$10.00)  
 Quarterly Indexes of Industrial Production, Australia, December Quarter 1990 (\$125.0; \$10.00)
- 22** Export Price Index, Australia, January 1991 (6405.0; \$7.50)
- 26** Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building, Eight Capital Cities, January 1991 (6407.0; \$10.00)  
 Price Index of Materials Used in House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra, January 1991 (6408.0; \$7.50)  
 Manufacturing Production, Australia, February 1991, Preliminary (\$301.0; \$10.00)  
 Registrations of New Motor Vehicles, Australia, February 1991, Preliminary (9301.0; \$10.00)
- 27** Price Indexes of Materials Used in Manufacturing Industries, Australia, January 1991 (6411.0; \$10.00)
- 28** Average Weekly Earnings, States and Australia, November 1990 (6302.0; \$10.00)  
 Prices Indexes of Articles Produced by Manufacturing Industry, Australia, January 1991 (6412.0; \$10.00)  
 Job Vacancies and Overtime, Australia, February 1991 (6354.0; \$11.50)

## The latest ...

Changes to key State indicators — consolidated to 19 March 1991



	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
— Percentage change from same period previous year —									
New capital expenditure (Sept. qtr 90)*	-0.9	-10.9	5.4	11.2	-17.9	37.2	n.a.	n.a.	-3.4
Retail turnover (Jan. 91) (trend estimate)	3.4	-2.8	4.2	9.1	2.4	6.1	n.a.	9.3	2.6
New motor vehicle registrations (Jan. 91)†	-22.3	-11.6	-16.3	-4.9	-22.7	-20.2	-20.4	0.3	-18.0
Number of dwelling unit approvals (Jan. 91)	0.6	-11.8	8.2	17.8	-33.3	-12.9	202.2	-1.9	-3.7
Value of total building work done (Sept. qtr 90)	-7.2	-7.7	-14.0	-6.3	-25.8	-18.8	-1.0	-9.0	-10.6
Employed persons (February 91)*	0.6	-2.8	-1.6	0.9	-1.1	-0.2	-6.4	2.2	-0.8
Capital city consumer price index (Dec. qtr 90)	6.4	7.4	6.2	7.8	7.4	6.1	7.1	6.8	6.9
Average weekly earnings (full-time adult ordinary time) (August 90)	5.4	7.0	6.9	7.3	7.9	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.4
Population (June 90)	1.0	1.4	2.6	1.0	2.5	1.2	0.6	2.3	1.5
Room nights in licensed hotels and motels, etc (June qtr 90)	5.4	-0.9	5.7	5.5	-4.1	-1.2	8.5	14.8	3.6

\* Seasonally adjusted except for NT and ACT. † Seasonally adjusted except for Tas., NT and ACT.

## Key national indicators – consolidated to 19 March 1991

		Period	Latest figure available		Percentage change (a) on		
			Original	Seasonally adjusted	Previous period	Corresponding period last year	
<b>National production</b>							
Gross domestic product	— current prices (f)	\$m	Sept. qtr 90	93,635	93,427	-0.8	3.6
	— 1984-85 prices (f)			63,152	63,670	-1.6	-0.7
<b>Industrial activity</b>							
New capital expenditure	— current prices	\$m	Dec. qtr 90	7,305	6,612	3.2	-10.6
	— 1984-85 prices			5,542	5,021	3.6	-10.3
Expected new capital expenditure		"	Three months to Dec. 90	8,311	n.a.	n.a.	-5.7
Retail turnover	— current prices	"	January 91	6,980	7,242	2.5	3.7
	— 1984-85 prices	"	Dec. qtr 90	16,480	14,620	-1.6	-1.6
New motor vehicle registrations		no.	January 91	36,344	43,963	0.8	-18.0
Dwelling unit approvals		"	January 91	9,189	10,784	10.1	-5.9
Value of all building approvals		\$m		1,501	1,668	11.4	-40.2
Value of total building work done		"					
	— current prices	"	Sept. qtr 90	7,214	6,951	-3.7	-10.6
	— 1984-85 prices	"		4,556	4,360	-4.2	-14.4
Manufacturers' sales	— current prices	"	Dec. qtr 90	36,754	35,064	1.0	-1.0
	— 1984-85 prices	"		25,318	24,134	0.0	-5.0
Expected manufacturers' sales		"	Six months to June 91	70,139	n.a.	n.a.	-1.8
<b>Labour</b>							
Employed persons		'000	February 91	7,739.3	7,792.5	-0.4	-0.8
Unemployment rate †		%	"	9.5	8.7	0.4	2.3
Participation rate †		"	"	63.8	63.6	-0.1	-0.1
Job vacancies		'000	November 90	34.1	35.4	-27.8	-45.6
Average weekly overtime per employee		hours	"	1.3	1.3	-1.9	-16.2
<b>Prices, profits and wages</b>							
Consumer price index	1980-81 = 100.0		Dec. qtr 90	214.5	n.a.	2.7	6.9
Price index of materials used in manufacturing industries	1984-85 = 100.0		December 90	128.8	n.a.	-3.7	9.0
Price index of articles produced by manufacturing industry	1988-89 = 100.0		December 90	112.8	n.a.	-0.6	6.3
Company profits before income tax		\$m	Dec. qtr 90	4,640	3,911	15.9	4.8
Average weekly earnings (Full-time adults; ordinary time)		\$	November 90	554.40	n.a.	2.5	7.3
<b>Interest rates (b) (monthly average)</b>							
90-day bank bills †		% per annum	January 91	11.85	n.a.	-0.20	-4.80
10-year Treasury bonds †		"		11.50	n.a.	-0.55	-1.30
<b>Balance of payments</b>							
Exports of merchandise		\$m	January 91	4,139	4,260	1.3	9.7
Imports of merchandise		"	"	4,252	4,156	2.0	9.4
Balance on merchandise trade (c)		"	"	-113	104	n.a.	87.4
Balance of goods and services (c)		"	"	-332	-130	61.5	29.5
Balance on current account (c)		"	"	-1,863	-1,582	10.0	-1.8
Terms of trade (d) (f)	1984-85 = 100.0		Sept. qtr 90	n.a.	105.3	0.3	
<b>Foreign investment</b>							
Net foreign debt		\$m	30 Dec. 90	130,771	n.a.	1.9	6.7
Net foreign liabilities		"	"	172,363	n.a.	0.4	5.6
<b>Exchange rates (monthly average)</b>							
SUS	per SA		January 91	0.7792	n.a.	1.2	-0.4
Trade weighted index	May 1970 = 100.0			57.6	n.a.	1.6	-4.6
<b>Other indicators</b>							
Population (resident at end of qtr)		million	June 90	17.1	n.a.	0.3	1.5
Overseas visitor arrivals (e)		'000	September 90	163	190	-3.2	6.2

(a) Based on seasonally adjusted figures where available. (b) Source: Reserve Bank of Australia. (c) For percentage changes, a minus sign indicates an increase in the deficit, no sign means a decrease in the deficit or an increase in the surplus. (d) The ratio of the price of goods and services for exports to that for imports. (e) Later figures expected to be released Wednesday, 20 March 1991. (f) Later figures expected to be released Thursday, 21 March 1991.

NOTES: † = change is shown in terms of percentage points. n.a. = not available.

Figures have been taken from a variety of ABS publications. Copies may be obtained from Information Services (see page 6).

Some of the figures shown are preliminary, some final, and some are revisions of previously published figures. Users should check the latest relevant publication or with the ABS Information Services if the status of the statistic is important.

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